Supply of sub-standard Rail tracks by Bhilai Steel Plant

†496 SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of rail accidents over the years in the country had occurred due to sub-standard rail tracks supplied by the Bhilai Steel Plant;

(b) if so, on which dates these accidents occurred, along with their sites, and the loss of life and property in these accidents;

(c) whether Government have identified the railway officers responsible for procurement of such sub-standard rail tracks; and

(d) if so, the details of those officers alongwith the action taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Indian Railways require about 4,00,000 Tons of rails every year. Improvement in specification of rails, and follow up for improving quality of production of rails at Bhilai Steel Plant (BSP) has been a continuous effort of the Railways.

BSP, the only indigenous supplier of rails, was not able to produce rails, to improved specifications, due to inadequate infrastructural facilities and accordingly, some temporary relaxations were granted to Steel Authority of India Ltd./BSP, without compromising safety, to avoid imports.

Officers of Directorate General Supplies & Disposals, an independent inspecting Government Agency conduct the inspection of rails at Bhilai Steel Plant.

In the past, there have been some accidents however, which have been attributed to the quality of rails.

(b) Derailments occurred in last two years i.e., from 1.4.98 to 31.10.99 are as under:

(i) Date of accident—26.7.98

Train No.—7015 (Plasa-Secunderabad Express.)
Location/KM-89/6-4
Block Section—Tummalacheruvu—Nadikude
(Guntur-Nadikude Section) of South Central Railway
Loss of Life—Nil
Loss of Property—Rs. 22.29 lakhs approx.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(ii) Date of accident—26.11.98
Train No.—2903 UP Mumbai Central-Amritsar Golden Temple Mail and subsequent side collision with 3162 DN Jammu Tawi-Sealdah Express.

Location/KM-337/5
Block Section-Khanna-Chawapail Section of Northern Railway
Loss of Life—212
Loss of Property—Rs. 289 lakhs approx
(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Strategy paper of the Railway Board

†497. SHRI BARJINDER SINGH HAMDARD:
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railway Board has prepared a strategy paper recently, in which it has been stressed not to invest money in non-profitable projects and to reduce the amount of subsidy in the rate of fares and generate money through new sources of income;

(b) if so, whether Government have formulated the future policy after giving consideration to this document;

(c) the reasons for not including steps to reduce extravagance in Railways in this document; and

(d) whether Government would take steps in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a "Status Paper on Railways—Some Issues and Options", was laid in the Parliament on May 27, 1998. The Status Paper sought to bring out the various issues facing the Railways and provide answer in the form of a strategy that would propel the Indian Railways on a high growth path.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) It has always been the endeavour of the Railways to take all economy and austerity measures to contain the expenditure and effect savings. During the current year, an action plan has also been formulated by the Railways for effecting savings so as to be able to absorb a major portion of post budgetary increases within the existing Budget grants.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.